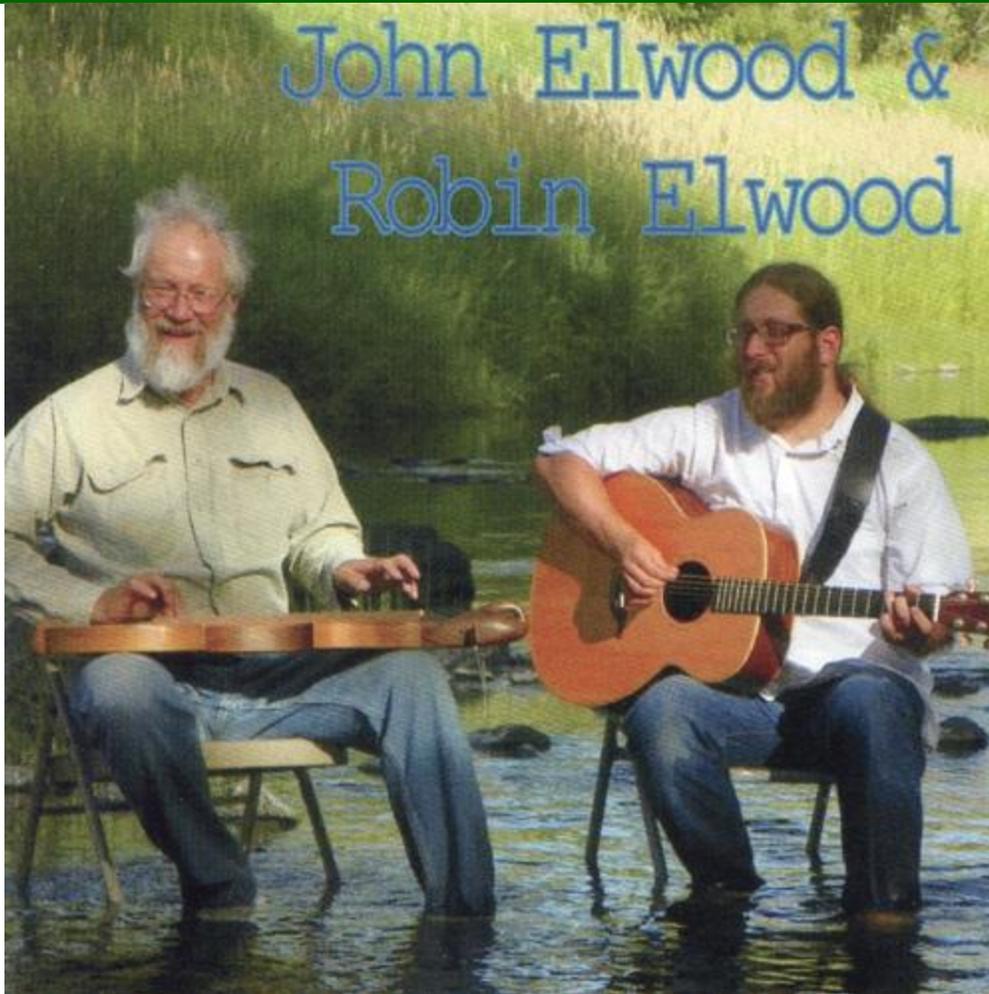


## CD REVIEW



### **JOHN ELWOOD & ROBIN ELWOOD**

**John and Robin Elwood © 2014**

[CD Baby](#)

Trans-generational music performed by father and son. This delightful CD presents some old songs not often heard, an original song, and a couple of instrumental tunes. John Elwood has been building mountain dulcimers in rural eastern Washington for forty years and is a masterful player of that instrument. His son Robin, a musician in Bellingham, Washington, grew up with traditional music played with his parents at home. The sounds of the dulcimer and guitar and a few other instruments, along with harmonious voices make for some very nice listening.

The CD begins with *Canadeeio*, a traditional Irish/Canadian ballad going back perhaps to the 18th century. It tells the story of girl who follows her sailor boy as a stow-away aboard a sailing ship. She is soon discovered and ends up in Canada married to the ship's captain. It is nicely accompanied by dulcimer, guitar and

harmonica. This is followed by an often-played tune, *Princess Royal*, said to be composed by the great Irish harper O'Carolan in about 1725. It consists of some well-played counterpoint between dulcimer and guitar – a delightful tune.

Next are a couple of jaunty songs, beginning with *Diamond Joe*, a Stephen Foster song about a river steamboat. A fun song, well-sung by John, with the dulcimer sounding like an old-time banjo. This is followed by my favorite song on the album, *Little Black Bull*. I immediately wanted to learn it. This song, collected by Carl Sandburg in Illinois, is also known as *Hoosen Johnny*. “Lawyers sat around the wood stoves of the taverns and hotels of the Eighth Circuit in Illinois and sang this on many a winter night. Lincoln heard it often.” The addition of a bass clarinet (played by Ruth Steele) to the accompaniment gives it a whimsical quality. The rhythmic nature of this song makes one want to join in.

*Child on Earth* by John Elwood is a well-crafted song reminiscent of the '60s folk revival. Its water theme is continued with *Waterbound*, a traditional song from southern Appalachia. Joined by the voice of John's wife, Sally Burkhart, this is a fine song for group singing. This is followed by the traditional Child ballad, *Matty Groves*, with a nice dulcimer and guitar accompaniment, and percussion by Matt Zook.

The album concludes with an original Celtic-style instrumental piece, *Heir to an Air*, composed by Robin's bandmate Jean Rogers, of the Bellingham group Lindsay Street. This is a fitting and comforting end to a fine collection of songs and tunes. I love the combination of dulcimer and guitar playing counterpoint in this tune.

Only a total of eight songs and tunes, this CD is full of some pleasant musical surprises. These aren't the usual songs and tunes one usually hears, but a collection lovingly put together from years of music played by a family through a couple of generations. Highly recommended.

[Stewart Hendrickson](#)